

News Release

Connection Between Generation NeXt and Need for Rural Broadband Outlined by U of M Crookston Faculty, Students, Alumni at Local Technology Conference

By David DeMuth, Krista Lemos on Wednesday, November 8, 2006

The availability of broadband in rural communities will have a direct affect on economic and sustainable development along with the ability to provide quality education attract and retain young people to keep these communities vibrant, according to Crookston campus faculty who played a lead role in the Blandin Foundation Rural Broadband Conference in Alexandria, Minn., this past month.

UMC faculty members David DeMuth, Ph.D., and Martin Lundell presented the keynote address entitled "Generation NeXt' on Broadband." They explained how the age group born in the 1980's and 90's are experiencing and using the Internet in new and innovative ways. Broadband initiatives are allowing this to happen, and broadband is vital to this generation's social networking, entertainment and education.

"We need to rethink the way we educate our young people in a culturally diverse world – a world that we can experience in increasingly richer ways through technology," said Lundell, UMC assistant professor in Information Technology Management. "The overarching message is we need ubiquitous broadband to make these things happen; without it our rural communities will be disadvantaged.

"In addition, the University of Minnesota, Crookston's involvement in these discussions is important in order to promote and develop initiatives that will benefit the region and the state."

The conference examined technologies, as well as the policies and legal directions that affect growth of the Internet as an economic and entertainment platform. Participants were invited to experience how to use some of the latest technologies through applications and to participate in discussions with political leaders about the issues of delivering broadband to local communities.

Faculty were joined at the event by six UMC students and alumni who participated in a "Power Users" demonstration and panel discussion. Students Teresa Boucha, Warren, Minn.; Shashanka Acharya; and Thaddeus Hogan; and Alumni Richard Laager '06 and Andrew Sheppard '05 were able to sharpen their presentation and communication skills, gain experience in grassroots policy making and contribute a service to greater Minnesota - realizing an integral portion of the University's mission.

Bruce Brorson, UMC associate professor in Math, Science, and Technology, commented, "It's quite an honor for us to play a major role in helping represent the needs of the next generation of Internet users."

DeMuth is an associate professor and head of the Math, Science and Technology Dept.

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